

THE TERROR IN THE NAVY

A Doc Savage Adventure By Kenneth Robeson

Originally published in *DOC SAVAGE Magazine* April 1937



*Annihilation strikes at the United States Navy fleet—
and only Doc Savage is able to find the hidden
menace as he smashes the power of*

The Terror in the Navy

By **KENNETH ROBESON**

Complete Book-length Novel

Chapter I WRECK!

THE two seamen met in the darkness near the stern of the navy destroyer, under an awning. They were cautious. They stood for a long time listening, and at last they were satisfied that no one was near enough to overhear.

One growled, "The chief's orders are for none of us to be seen talkin' together!"

The other hissed, "I know it! But something's gone wrong!"

"What? We've covered every angle."

"That nosey Lieutenant Bowen Toy! He's haunting me. He's shadowing me. If he keeps it up, he may learn too much. He's got to be killed!"

There was no light and no sound to show that four other naval destroyers were steaming full speed in the wake of this one, guided by a radio beam transmitted from this, the leading craft.

STOP GO TO APARTMENT OF MY
 BROTHER CAPTAIN BLACKSTONE TOY IN
 PARKVIEW HOTEL AND GET NOTES
 HIDDEN IN PICTURE OF MYSELF
 LIEUT BOWEN TOY

“Send this to a commercial station,” Toy directed, handing the operator the message. “And get that message out instantly!”

“Yes, sir!”

Lieutenant Toy stepped out of the radio shack and walked warily toward the bridge.

Then, with stunning suddenness, he was flying headlong down the deck. He hit a stanchion, glanced off that, fell and turned over and over. There followed a moment of brittle silence.

The ship had been traveling at about thirty knots a moment before. Now it was at a standstill.

Bells began ringing. There was a loud report amidships, followed by a shrill hissing. This meant a steam line had been broken. The destroyer rolled heavily as a wave hit it, and there was a grinding from underneath the hull.

Lieutenant Toy gained his feet, scrambled across the sloping deck, hauled himself up a companionway and reached the navigating bridge.

The navigating officer’s face was pale and terrible. The helmsman was propped against his wheel, mouth open, eyes weird. Both men looked as if they had just seen a horned devil.

“*What’d we hit!*” Toy shouted.

The navigating officer made feeble, stabbing gestures at the helmsman.

“Tell what—what happened—again!” he croaked. The helmsman blinked. When he spoke, it was in a tone that sounded, somehow, as if he did not believe himself.

“Something—*something*—pulled the ship through the sea!” he mumbled. “*It just took hold of us and pulled us into whatever we hit!*”

Chapter II THE “POWER”!

NAVY men are well trained, and it was natural that some one should

immediately take a sounding. The cry of the one who had dropped the lead overboard came from forward.

“By the mark, two!” the voice yelled. “Solid rock!”

Lieutenant Toy gulped, “Only two fathoms of water under the stern, and a rock bottom! That’s impossible! Our course was ten miles offshore!”

The steersman gasped, “I tell you, a *thing* had this ship!”

“Don’t be ridiculous!” snapped the navigating officer.

The steersman said, sullenly, “I could *feel* the pull of the thing! It was *drawing* the ship through the water! I fought it. I put the wheel hard over half a dozen times, but the vessel simply wouldn’t respond. I tell you, there was a *thing!*”

Lieutenant Toy heard that, and his eyes came wide and seemed about to pop out of his head. “It struck this destroyer first!” he shrieked. “It’s *real!* It can destroy ships!” A moment of terrible silence followed.

“Those men—the two sailors I overheard talking under the awning—they know about it!” Toy howled. “Grab them before they can get away! Get them! Quick, I’ll point them out and tell—”

The rest of his howl was lost in a terrific crash alongside. There was a rending and grinding noise. There was that peculiar, uncanny screech made by steel plates being ripped apart. Men shouted wildly.

Lieutenant Toy grabbed a brass stanchion, and a ghastly expression came over his face.

“The other boats are hitting!” he gasped.

A second crash came, followed shortly by a third. A scraping rumble stopped Toy’s forthcoming groan. It came from farther away. The last destroyer had piled on the rock.

Rockets, parachute flares, began going up, and their light illuminated a confused scene. Five sleek gray war craft with their bellies torn out on hard rock. They rolled as big, greasy swells nudged them about, and there was an almost steady grinding of steel hull plates on stone.

Officers on the boats’ bridges megaphoned profanely at each other. They blamed the lead destroyer for what had happened.

Chapter III CAUTIOUS CROOKS

THE man in New York did not replace the telephone on its stand after hanging up. He held the instrument close to his chest and thought deeply.

It was night, and the man was in bed.

He reached over and touched a tiny jack-switch concealed under the telephone stand. This apparently connected the telephone with a private wire. The man jiggled the hook.

"Yeah, chief?" said a sleepy voice.

"We have received what is sometimes called a bad break," said the man in bed.

"Yeah?"

"You have the file of information which we gathered about Doc Savage?"

"Yeah," said the sleepy voice, not so sleepy now. "But I still don't see why we went to the trouble of finding out so much about Doc Savage."

"Doc Savage is logically the one man we have most to fear," reminded the man in bed. "In short, we learned everything we could about him because he might menace our plans. I thought it would be a wise move. Now I *know*."

"You mean that Doc Savage has an inkling of what we're going to do?"

"Lieutenant Toy sent a radiogram to Doc Savage before he—ah—before Toy met a mysterious fate, as the newspapers will put it. That is the bad break I mentioned. We've got to stop that message before it reaches Doc Savage."

"Was it a radiogram?"

"Yes."

"Leave it to me!" said the man on the other end of the wire, and listened until he heard his chief hang up. Then the fellow put the receiver on the hook and began to remove his pajamas.

He was a long, snaky man with an almost animal growth of black hair on his chest and up and down his back. It is a popular theory that eyes have to be small to be mean. This man's eyes were big—and mean.

When he had dressed, he glanced about the close and rather untidy room, took two nasty-looking flat pistols in holsters off a wall hook, fastened them under his coat, and

walked to the door. He passed into another close and untidy room, in which six men lay on cots.

One of the men on the cots opened an eye and said, "What a conscience you must have! Don't it ever let you sleep?"

"Get dressed!" The snaky, hairy man shook the others. "Get dressed, you Davids—we're gonna sally forth after a Goliath!"

HALF an hour later, they were tying shoestrings and ties and yawning, as their car moved through downtown Manhattan. The snaky, hairy man was talking, explaining. When he finished, one of the others addressed him by what seemed to be his nickname.

"Fuzzy," said the man, "this Doc Savage is big-time poison."

"Keep your shirt on," said the hairy "Fuzzy." "We'll do this so Savage will never know a thing about it."

The driver stopped the sedan, and they all looked out. They saw a giant office building which hurled itself upward until it was lost against the cloudy night sky.

Fuzzy pointed a limber, hairy finger almost straight up into the night.

"Top floor," he said. "Eighty-six stories up. Sort of an eagle's nest."

They got out and went into the giant building—it was admittedly the most imposing in New York City. An elevator let them out two flights below Doc Savage's floor, and they climbed stairs, so as not to be seen.

On the last flight of steps, Fuzzy waved the others back.

"Kind of erase yourselves," he directed. "Let me look the ground over."

Fuzzy then ran up the final flight of stairs. There was a door which seemed to be made of bronze. Letters on it were so unobtrusive as to be almost difficult to locate.

Clark Savage, Jr.

There was no knob on the door, no handle; it seemed to be just a slab of bronze. Fuzzy happened to know it was a slab of armor steel, bronze-plated.

Repeated pressings of the button beside the door got no answer, and Fuzzy went back to his men.

"Coast clear," he grinned. "The bronze guy ain't in."

"How we gonna get into that place?" asked the pessimist. "It's more burglar-proof than a bank vault."

Fuzzy held out a hand to one of the men. "Gimme that package I gave you to carry."

The packet which the man handed over was the size of a pocket match box. Fuzzy tapped it with a finger.

"This holds a piece of radioactive metal," he said. "Watch what happens."

He walked toward the door of Doc Savage's office. The door opened mysteriously.

"Hah!" said Fuzzy, pleased. "What'd I tell you? There's a sensitive electroscope hidden beside the door. When a piece of radioactive metal is brought near it, the electroscope causes a relay to close and that makes a machine open the door."

He walked through the door.

"You guys wait outside," he directed.

THE room in which hirsute, serpentine Fuzzy found himself seemed to be a reception room. Principal items of furniture were an enormous safe, a number of comfortable-appearing chairs, and a rather remarkable-looking inlaid table.

Fuzzy ignored everything in the room, and went into a library which held thousands of tomes.

Libraries are traditionally gloomy places, but this one was not. The windows along one side were so large that the wall seemed almost solidly of glass.

Fuzzy looked at the windows and grinned. It was by watching through these that a great deal had been learned about Doc Savage. The method employed had been ingenious, and Fuzzy was particularly proud of it because he had thought it up himself.

He picked up a telephone and called the office of the concern handling radio messages.

He asked, "Has a message come for Doc Savage, signed by Lieutenant Bowen Toy? This is Doc Savage's headquarters. . . . No? Will you telephone the message as soon as it arrives? Do not send it by messenger. Telephone it. Thank you."

Fuzzy hung up and gave every sign of being ready to wait as long as necessary. He wandered over to the window.

In the night sky, some distance away, blazed an electric sign advertising a little-known variety of beer. In fact, the variety of beer did not even exist!

The sign was held in the air by a balloon, which was in turn moored to a barge in the Hudson River.

Fuzzy waved both arms. The electric sign on the balloon promptly blinked. Fuzzy grinned. His men, with extremely powerful astronomical telescopes trained on Doc Savage's office, had recognized their straw boss.

Some time elapsed before the telephone rang. Fuzzy sprang to the receiver, lifted it, said, "Doc Savage's headquarters!"

"This is the radio office with a message," the voice said.

The voice read Lieutenant Bowen Toy's message.

"Thank you," said Fuzzy. "Do not bother to send a copy by mail, or by messenger. It won't be necessary."

"Very well," replied the radio office clerk. "We will not."

Fuzzy hung up, went out, let the trick outer door close behind him, and shoved his chest out triumphantly at his men.

"That fixes it!" he said. "Doc Savage will never know a message was sent to him!"

They walked toward the stairs.

A young woman came up the stairs. She pointed on old-fashioned six-shooter at them—a six-shooter with a barrel so big that any man present could have put his little finger in the barrel with ease.

"They gave me this thing to cut my teeth on!" the girl said, jiggling the six-shooter in her hand.

THE men goggled.

The young woman would have gotten a monopoly of male attention anywhere. She was tall and had every curve necessary to make an exquisitely moulded feminine form. Her features were what the old literary masters would have called finely chiseled, with an outdoor skin.

One remarkable quality was the unusual bronze hue of her hair and the almost matching color of her eyes. Or perhaps her eyes tended more to golden.

Her frock and accessories—it was a silver and white evening creation—were the ultra in fashion.

Fuzzy gulped, “Who’re you?”

“Patricia Savage,” the woman said. “Oh, you’ve never heard of me, probably. Doc Savage is my cousin. I have a beauty establishment uptown where I charge outrageous prices, and the customers like it.”

Fuzzy swallowed. The mouth of the six-shooter seemed incredibly big.

“Uh—well—uh,” he mumbled.

“You gentlemen look like a bunch of crooks to me,” Pat said brightly. “And why were you pussy-footing around? While you think up some lies to answer, you can back into Doc’s office, with your hands in the air.”

A man appeared silently on the stairs behind Pat Savage. He threw a gun which he held. It hit the back of Pat’s head.

Fuzzy, the others, lunged forward. Pat was dazed. She tried to get her gun up. Fuzzy kicked it out of her hand.

Another man drew an automatic pistol.

“Let her have it?” he wanted to know.

“And get Doc Savage on our trail for murder!” snorted Fuzzy. “Don’t be like that! Here! We’ll do this!”

He picked up Pat’s big six-shooter, measured her, and hit her over the temple. She fell. Fuzzy dropped her big six-gun beside her.

“Amscray, as Caesar would say!” he ordered.

They went down some flights of stairs, entered an elevator, and, looking very innocent, rode down to the street.

As they got into their car on the darkened street, the man who had thrown the gun reminded every one, “It was lucky I saw this dame and hid me out while she passed me up!”

“Don’t worry, you’ll get your bouquets!” said Fuzzy. The men did not drive away fast enough to attract attention from any cops who might be around.

Chapter IV THE MAN OF METAL

PATRICIA SAVAGE opened her gold eyes and with her hands tried to help herself up off the floor. She sniffed indignantly when

she discovered she was sitting in a chair. She looked around.

“Oh!” she said. She sounded exasperated. “I might have known you would happen around and catch me when I wasn’t at my best!”

The giant bronze man standing before her smiled faintly, which was a rare thing for him to do. Some persons had known him for years and had never seen him smile. Not that he went around looking gloomy. His amazingly regular features, almost classic in their firm handsomeness, simply had no expression at all, most of the time.

He stood near the door, and it looked doubtful if he could pass through it without ducking. Yet, when he stepped away from the door, he seemed to shrink in stature, due to the remarkable symmetry of his development. There had to be something around to which his size might be compared before his full Herculean stature was apparent.

His hair was straight, a slightly darker bronze than that of Pat Savage, and his eyes were gold, also, but of a different nature. The bronze man’s orbs were like pools of flake metal, always stirred by some invisible force. They seemed also to possess a weird, compelling power.

The sinews in his neck were like hausers, the thews in the backs of his hands like round files.

“Doc Savage!” Pat exclaimed cheerfully. “You’re smiling! You’re actually becoming human!”

The remarkable-looking bronze man spoke. He had a voice that was arresting, not so much because of the things that were in it, but because of the feeling of things that were left out, things the voice could do if called upon.

“You happened along at an unlucky time, Pat.”

Pat sniffed audibly. “I’ll have you know if it hadn’t been for me, you might never have known some men had raided your office!”

“Wrong,” Doc Savage said quietly.

“You’re not telling me I got hit on the head for nothing?”

DOC SAVAGE walked into the corridor. Despite his size, he seemed remarkably light on his feet. He touched the

**NAVY PLANE CARRIER WRECKED!
CRASHES STEAMER!**

The wreck of the aircraft carrier had occurred only a short time previously, near Norfolk, Virginia.

In an adjacent column was another expressive headline.

**NAVAL EXPERTS BLAME
MYSTERY FORCE FOR FIVE
DESTROYER AND PLANE
CARRIER WRECKS.**

Navy officials hinted tonight that some mysterious and unexplained influence caused the five destroyers and the plane carrier to run off their courses to disaster.

That was all of that angle of the story. Evidently navy officials had been afraid about hinting. It was enough of an inference, however, coupled with what was to follow, to set the entire country agog within the next twenty-four hours.

Doc Savage folded the paper slowly, his bronze features expressionless, and drove on.

RENNY gave the impression of being a walking pair of fists. His hands were tremendous, each almost half a gallon of bone and gristle with the consistency of flint. He had a long face, and habitually wore the expression of a man going to the funeral of a good friend.

Renny was Colonel John Renwick, who loved two things: trouble and engineering. As an engineer, he was world-famed.

As an associate of Doc Savage, he got his excitement.

Renny dropped out of a freight car near the water front. He had a newspaper in his hand and he rustled it in the murk.

"Queer thing about the wrecking of them five navy destroyers," he said. "I've just been reading about it."

"It is queer," Doc agreed.

"Queer!" Renny tossed the newspaper aside. "Say! Long Tom and Johnny and me have been watching them guys in that beer-sign balloon for almost a week. How much longer do we have to keep it up?"

Renny had difficulty pitching his tremendous, rumbling voice in a low tone.

Doc said, "We'll look into it now."

They advanced through the murk, using care to avoid noise, and shortly came upon two other men crouched in the darkness on the river bank.

"I'll be superamalgamated!" whispered one of the pair, who was very tall, and thinner than it seemed a man could be and still live.

He was William Harper Littlejohn, eminent archaeologist and geologist, and an inveterate user of big words. He was commonly called "Johnny."

"They've got one guy watching the balloon cable winch," said the second of the two men.

This second man was not an impressive physical specimen. He gave the impression of having grown up some place where it was always dark.

He was Major Thomas J. Roberts, electrical wizard, a man whose appearance of being a physical wreck was deceptive. He had secured the nickname of "Long Tom" somewhere.

"How many in the balloon?" Doc queried.

"Two," said pale Long Tom.

"And one watching the winch," added Renny.

"Can you grab them?" Doc asked.

"We can have a swell time trying!" grinned big-fisted Renny.

"Question them," Doc directed. "Find out what connection their watching me has with the wrecking of the destroyers and the aircraft carrier."

The darkness then absorbed him, or seemed to, so silently did he depart.

**Chapter V
PERSISTENT PAT**

DOC SAVAGE'S three aids—Renny, Long Tom and Johnny—looked at each other questioningly after their chief had gone.

"What's he up to?" Long Tom grunted.

"An interrogatory promulgation concerning what might be called an Ethiopian enigma," said Johnny.

"I'll bet Doc already has this covered from all angles," said Renny. "He covers things like the dew."

"Doc," said big-worded Johnny, "is a compendium of Machiavellian callidity."

"He's *what*?" asked Long Tom.

"A lad who doesn't overlook any bets," translated Renny.

Long Tom snorted quietly. "Let's give that balloon our attention."

They crept forward, and before long could make out details. The balloon cable was of alloy wires wound around a core of two insulated telephone wires. The cable was attached to a winch turned by a gasoline motor. The winch was mounted on a heavy, ancient barge which was moored securely to the end of a dock.

A watchman sat on a box, his back against the winch. He was a blond man who looked as if he needed exercise. He was having difficulty keeping awake. At intervals, he reached up and slapped his own face.

The man was slapping his face when Renny leaped soundlessly from behind and grabbed his arms. Long Tom clamped a hand over the man's mouth. They held the fellow helpless.

"We could double as spooks, eh?" big-fisted Renny chuckled.

Tall, bony Johnny leaned close to the prisoner. He used small words.

"What's the idea of this balloon spying business?" he asked.

The man gritted, "You can kindly go—"

He did not finish, because Renny took the fellow's whole face in one huge hand. It was almost as if the big-fisted engineer had palmed an apple.

"If I squeezed, I think it might pop like a melon," Renny rumbled, referring to the head.

"Let's get that balloon down first," suggested Long Tom.

Doc Savage never used violence where it could possibly be avoided. This was a characteristic of the bronze man. His five aids, however, tended to the other extreme. They were not loath to use rough stuff occasionally.

They knocked their prisoner senseless to save the bother of tying him up.

They examined the balloon winch. There was no hand crank. They would have

to drag it down with the gasoline motor, which would mean noise.

"No other way, though," said Renny, "unless we can talk Long Tom into climbing the cable after them."

"Don't be silly!" sniffed the pallid electrical wizard. "We should have Monk for that."

They started the motor, and the winch drum revolved, winding the balloon down.

Doc Savage's three assistants kept a close watch. They held flashlights and peculiar machine pistols which Doc Savage himself had perfected, guns firing unconsciousness-producing "mercy" bullets at a tremendous speed.

The balloon seemed to get larger as it came down. It was like a fat wiener, not too well stuffed, with a basket hanging underneath. Its electric beer sign got brighter and brighter.

"This is as simple as catching catfish!" Renny grinned.

Then the wire cable came hissing down upon them, giving them a belaboring, and the winch engine raced madly.

The balloon bounded away into the night sky!

THERE was noise and confusion until Johnny, hopping about like a long-legged porch spider, got the winch engine shut off.

"Holy cow!" boomed Renny. "They unfastened the cable!" Their prisoner, who had regained his senses during the excitement, snarled, "You guys ain't the Slippery Slims you thotcha was!"

Renny promptly reached down, hit him, and the prisoner went to sleep again.

"Come on!" yelled Johnny, for once using small words. "We've got to keep track of that balloon! Get a plane! Get an airplane!"

The balloon was drifting down the river, toward the bay and, beyond, the open sea. But there was not enough wind to carry it very fast.

Doc Savage's three aids raced for their car, which was hidden in a near-by alley. Pallid Long Tom stopped, grabbed bony Johnny, and gave him a shove back toward the wharf.

"You're elected to stay and watch the prisoner!"

Johnny yelled, “But it was me that thought of using a plane—”

“A swell idea!” barked Long Tom. “And, as your reward for thinking of it, you stay where it is safe and watch that prisoner.”

Bony Johnny made disgusted noises, and the other two ran off in the darkness. Johnny liked excitement too well to fancy the prosaic job of guarding a senseless captive.

Long Tom, when he was out of hearing, chuckled, “We horsed that job off on him slick!”

Which would have thrown Johnny into a spasm, had he heard it.

Their car was one of Doc Savage’s special machines. Renny switched the radio on. It was an all-wave set, and happened to be tuned on a local broadcast.

An extremely late dance program had been interrupted, evidently, and a news bulletin was being read.

“A late national radio press flash,” said the announcer. “The United States battleship *Oglethorpe* less than fifteen minutes ago struck a rock on the Pacific Coast near San Francisco and is sinking. Hope of saving the *Oglethorpe* has been abandoned. Many lives are believed to have been lost.”

Renny and Long Tom were grimly silent after that. “Holy cow!” Renny muttered suddenly. “That’s the third major naval disaster tonight!”

He moved the radio receiver knobs, shifting it from the broadcast band to the short-wave one, on which Doc Savage did his radio transmitting and receiving.

Long Tom was leaning forward, giving the tuning his close attention, when a bark from deep-voiced Renny startled him.

“Holy cow!” Renny rumbled. “Look! What’n blazes is happenin’ to our balloon?”

The entire street suddenly became white with light.

BOTH craned their necks out of the car. The machine promptly hopped the curb, grazed a telephone pole, and upset a stack of ash cans.

“Watch where you’re goin’!” Long Tom yelled.

Renny got the car back into the street, stopped, and they both looked out again.

“Who the heck can *that* be?” Long Tom exploded.

That was an airplane, a little streamlined trick which looked cute from that distance. From the manner in which it was swooping back and forth in the heavens, it could out-travel many a professional racing job.

The pretty little plane was visible because it was bathed in the glow from a parachute flare. The plane must have dropped the flare directly above the balloon.

Little whiskers of fire ran out from the nose of the plane.

“Machine gun!” Long Tom grunted.

“Riddling our balloon!” Renny boomed.

“Well, it’ll make it come down quicker!”

The balloon, it appeared, was sinking. The basket swinging beneath the bag was in shadow, so it was impossible to tell what the occupants were doing.

Renny and Long Tom drove recklessly down the Waterfront streets, keeping under the bag. It became evident that the balloon was going to fall in the bay, just off Battery Park, on the lower-most end of Manhattan Island.

“We gotta find a boat and get out there when they come down!” thundered Renny.

They failed to find a boat, excepting a dory, which was padlocked and chained, and anyway, was minus oars.

“We’ll swim!” Renny decided.

All of Doc Savage’s aids were excellent swimmers.

“We don’t want to be under the bag when it hits the water!” warned Long Tom.

They might have saved their apprehensions, however, for the basket touched slowly, and the rest of the bag remained aloft for some time.

Renny and Long Tom swam to the bag, impulsively grasped the dangling lines, and hauled themselves up. They looked, Renny swinging the beam of a flashlight, and both became very silent. They climbed into the basket, peered around, then jumped out and swam clear as the bag collapsed.

“If they had been in there, they’d probably have shot us, anyway,” Renny said gloomily, treading water.

“But how’d they get out?” Long Tom snapped. “Where’d they go?”

"Only one explanation," Renny said. "Parachutes!"

"Parachutes!" Long Tom gritted. "We should've kept a spotlight on the balloon!"

The little plane circled rapidly overhead, went off down the river, and approached against the wind. It was equipped with floats, and the pilot made a skillful landing.

Renny and Long Tom trod water and watched the plane approach. At the first sign of danger, they intended to duck beneath the surface.

Pat Savage shoved her attractive head out of the plane's cabin when the craft was closer and greeted, "Do you boys often go swimming after midnight with all your clothes on?"

"Phooey to you!" said Long Tom.

PAT brought her plane alongside, and they climbed aboard.

"Where'd they go?" Renny wanted to know. "The two in the balloon, I mean."

"Mystery to me," said Pat.

"*Hm-m-m-m.*" Renny wrung water out of his coat skirts. "Where'd you get this plane?"

"Built it to enter races next summer," said Pat.

Long Tom snapped suddenly, "Look here, Pat! Doc wouldn't like to have you mixing in this! If Doc were here, he would tell you to clear out."

"And telling," snapped Pat, "is all the good it would do!"

"Look!" Renny grunted suddenly and pointed. "What's them things?"

Two collapsed masses of silk were floating in the water, buoyed up by patches of air imprisoned under the cloth. Parachutes!

"That explains how they got out of the balloon," said Renny disgustedly. "Left it before you dropped those flares!"

They gathered the parachutes aboard, aware they might serve as clues. Then Pat taxied her plane up the river.

"Kinda head for that pier to starboard," Long Tom said.

"We left Johnny there, guarding a prisoner." They alighted on the barge and looked about and called.

Then they became alarmed. Excited dashing about followed for some time.

At last they found Johnny's somewhat shapeless hat lying in a dark spot. Long Tom picked it up. He dropped it almost instantly, and held his hands out in front of him.

"Blood!" he said hoarsely. "On the hat!"

Chapter VI THE TRAP

GAUNT, incredibly bony Johnny had blood on his hand, too. He was acutely conscious of this, the first thing as he awakened. He was also in a car. He opened his eyes, saw blackness, and something hurt his eyeballs. Blindfolded, of course! Somebody had banged him over the head on the pier, he recalled.

"An unpropitious situation," Johnny said vaguely.

"Yep!" said a harsh voice. "He must be the one called Johnny. The one who uses big words."

A man groaned. Johnny reflected that this one who groaned sounded about as he himself felt.

"How you comin', pal?" a voice asked the other sufferer.

"I guess I'll live," mumbled the man who had groaned. "Say, did you two guys get out of the balloon with parachutes, then come back and get me?"

"That's the idea," said the voice. "We popped your bony pal, here, on his scholarly head."

"Where we goin' now?"

"To get in touch with Fuzzy," the other replied. "He should be told that Doc Savage wasn't as dumb as we figured. Fuzzy can tell the chief, and we'll get our orders."

Bony Johnny lay perfectly still. He didn't want them knocking him senseless again. He wanted to stay awake and hear all he could. Maybe he could overhear enough information to explain the mystery of what was happening to the United States navy ships.

They rode for a long time. Johnny's blindfold was removed. He could see suburban streets.

"Just yell," he was told, "and you'll learn what a dead man feels like."

Johnny didn't yell.

"India!" he called. "Our friend Fuzzy and his men are here!"

"What do they want?" a sleepy feminine voice asked.

"Nothing nice, you may be sure," Von Zidney said, in a dry voice.

The door opened, and a young woman came in.

Johnny, who had been brought inside the house, was not an impressionable gentleman where femininity was concerned. But Johnny now emitted a gasp of admiration worthy of the most susceptible youth.

The young woman was a knock-out! She had Pat Savage's figure, almost, except that she tended a little more to nicely rounded curves, whereas Pat was sinewy. She had soft, brown hair and a tremendous wealth of it. She had the most gorgeous eyes Johnny had ever seen. The bony geologist swallowed twice and felt younger than he had in years.

"What do you want?" "India" Allison asked softly.

Fuzzy did not look at the young woman. None of his men looked at her. Johnny, staring for all he was worth, noted this, and was puzzled.

Fuzzy drew a letter from a pocket and said, "This is a letter written by Bowen Toy to his brother Blackstone. We stole it. It is a sample of Bowen's handwriting."

Fuzzy drew from another pocket a sheet of peculiarly heavy, porous note paper, and grunted, "You'll use this to write a note on, duplicating Bowen Toy's handwriting."

"What shall I write?" asked India Allison.

Fuzzy said, still not looking at her, "Write for any one who reads the note to go to Captain Blackstone Toy for information about any one who might have been an enemy of Lieutenant Bowen Toy. Then write that the note must be burned immediately. Underline that part about the note being burned."

India Allison took the papers, murmured, "I must be alone to do a good job of copying the handwriting," and went out.

Johnny, looking after India Allison, reflected that she had the sweetest eyes he had ever seen, and that hidden deep in them was the light of an incredible fear.

India Allison, who looked like Michelangelo's idea of an angel, was scared stiff of something.

INDIA ALLISON locked the door through which she had passed. She stood there a moment. She was trembling, and she became very white.

She went to a writing desk, turned the light on and examined the note paper closely.

"The old trick for eliminating a spy who was about to be caught!" she gasped.

She glanced about, as if fearful of being observed. Then she pulled the writing-desk light down, so that it bathed only a small area.

Outside, Fuzzy called, "Hey! We haven't a lot of time!"

The girl made no answer, and Fuzzy paced impatiently.

At last, the young woman came out and extended the bit of thick, porous paper, which now bore writing, and the letter with the sample handwriting.

"The chief won't forget this," Fuzzy said, taking them.

The girl said nothing. Fear was in the back of her soft eyes.

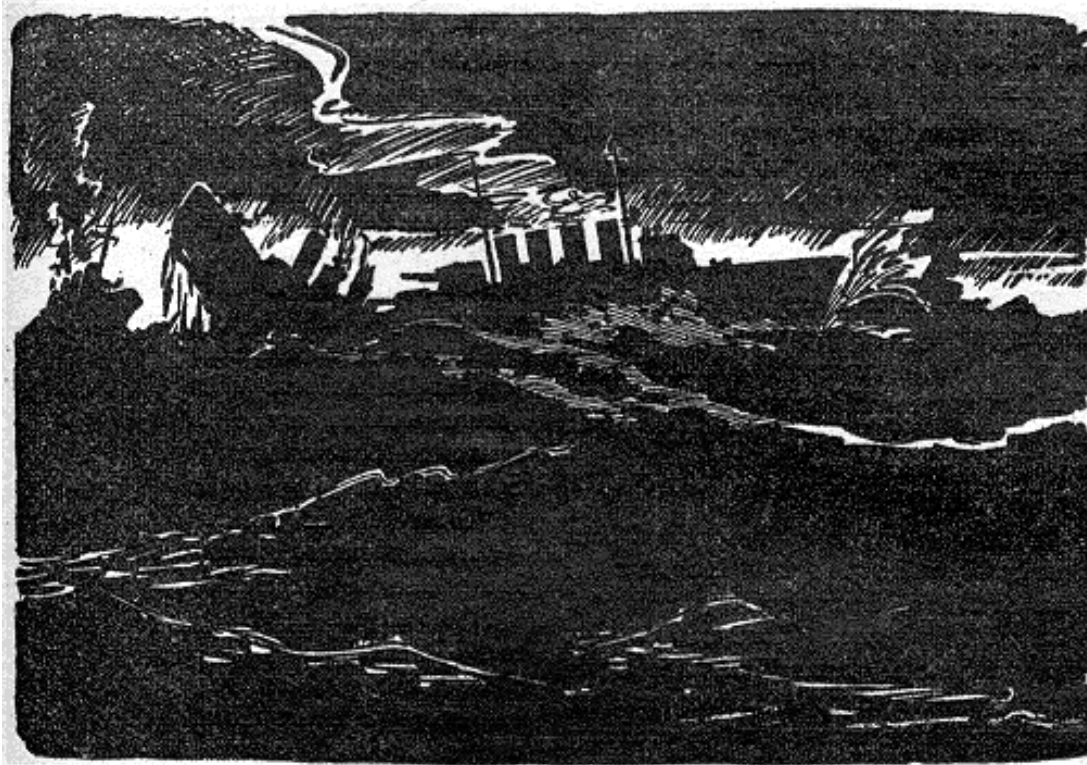
They left India Allison and Lieber Von Zidney in the big brick house and drove toward the Parkview Hotel.

The Parkview was an imposing block of masonry in the Bay View section of Brooklyn. The mouth of New York Bay and its parade of ships could be viewed from one side and two ends of the hotel. It was in an apartment district. As a hotel, the Parkview flourished by renting apartments to naval officers and their families, because it was not far from the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Fuzzy seemed to know what he was doing. He went to an apartment on the fourth floor, the name plate on the door of which read:

Captain Blackstone Toy, U. S. N.

Fuzzy used what was evidently a skeleton key and let himself into a sitting room which held, in addition to the usual hotel furniture, some fittings purchased by the occupant. The customary French prints were missing from the walls, and in their place hung personal pictures.



Working with speed, Fuzzy lifted down a picture of Lieutenant Bowen Toy. He pulled brads out of the back, and took out the cardboard backing of the picture, disclosing three sheets of typewritten paper. He read these sketchily.

"Hell's bells!" he gulped. "It's lucky we got these before Doc Savage put his hands on them!"

Fuzzy removed from a pocket the sheet of thick, porous note paper on which the girl had written. He placed this where the sheets of typewritten paper had been.

He replaced the cardboard picture backing. He hung the picture back on the wall.

"That," he said grimly, "will fix Doc Savage."

"But I thought we were gonna set a trap to croak the bronze guy?" a man asked.

"We have," Fuzzy told him.

"Huh?"

Fuzzy pointed at the picture.

"The writing on that note says to burn it." He pointed to a fireplace across the room. "There's a convenient place to burn it."

As an afterthought, he went to the fireplace. It was a gas log. He turned it on, touched a match to it, and adjusted the flame so that it was not too high.

"That makes it even simpler," he said.

"I don't get it," said the man. "I don't see any death trap."

Fuzzy chuckled.

"That piece of porous note paper is impregnated with a chemical which, when it is burned, releases a gas that will kill a man instantly," he said. "The minute Doc Savage burns that paper, he will die."

THEY went down to the street. It was almost dawn. Shade, black hat brim bent down over his eyes, waited behind the bakery truck wheel.

He extended a newspaper.

"Newsboy came past minute ago," he said. "I got a paper off him. Thought you might be interested."

Fuzzy took the journal. Headlines were large.

FOURTH NAVAL DISASTER OF NIGHT. NAVY SUPPLY SHIP CRASHES IN PANAMA CANAL

hint of mysterious force driving vessel into locks rumored as navy has fourth disaster of night.



Doc touched a corner of the note to the flames. It gave off much smoke, which curled up around Doc's face.

"Oh!" choked a voice back of the window. "Oh!"

The owner of the voice came in. It was India Allison. More than ever horror was in her eyes as she flung across the floor and dropped beside Doc Savage.

"Why did it work?" she gasped. "What made it overcome you? I thought it was harmless paper?"

She reached for Doc Savage, as if to shake him.

Doc Savage, moving his metallic hands only a short distance, caught her wrists.

India Allison choked. "What—what did—"

"It was harmless paper," Doc Savage said quietly. "You substituted it for their paper impregnated with poison chemicals."

"You *knew* that!" she gasped. "How?" Doc appeared not to hear her query, and put one of his own.

"Why are you here?" he asked.

"Listen!" she said rapidly. "When I heard they were afraid of you, I determined to get to you the first chance I could and ask you for help!"

Doc got to his feet. The young woman got up, also, and gripped one of his arms tightly with both her hands.

"They brought that piece of note paper to me, and I knew it was a death instrument," she said. "I decided they were going to trap you. They would use such a clever murder method only on some one such as you. So I exchanged a harmless piece of paper for the other one. Then I followed them here."

She crowded closer to the bronze man.

"I climbed the fire escape, intending to wait until you came," she continued. "You were here, and just as I came, I saw you burn the paper."

Doc Savage walked to the window, not because he wanted to see the window, but because he wanted to get away from the disturbing presence of the young woman.

There was a fire escape outside the window. The street below was beginning to fill with traffic.

"What is your story?" he asked.

Exquisitely beautiful India Allison brought her soft presence close again and took hold of his arm.

"I'm scared!" she said. "We are menaced by something you can't see!"

DOC SAVAGE looked at the hand on his arm, and reflected that he had never seen a more perfectly shaped feminine extremity.

"Five weeks ago, it started," the girl said. "First it was only—boxes and things falling off shelves. Once, a piano upset. Chairs turned over."

She gave the most violent shudder which Doc Savage had ever seen a young woman give, holding onto his arm tightly as she did so.

"Then Lieber Von Zidney was seized and—and hurled against a wall and badly bruised by something—something he could not see!"

"It sounds rather ghostly," Doc offered.

"You don't believe me!" she said wearily. "I didn't expect you to! It's too

fantastic to think there can be a force—something invisible—which can seize persons and hurl them about. Or which can grab one's car and force it off the road, which is what happened to me at one time."

"The navy ships which met disaster last night," Doc reminded her. "There was talk of some mysterious force, according to the newspapers."

The girl gathered herself. "Two weeks ago, a man with a sawed-off shotgun appeared. He said he was there to protect us against the mysterious attacks, and that we were to stay inside and inform no one of what was happening. The man refused to say who he was, why he was there, or what he was doing. He said he was there to guard us against what he called—a horrible thing."

"I see." Doc noted the exquisite texture of the skin of the slender hand on his arm.

"I am Von Zidney's ghost writer," said the girl. "Von Zidney does technical articles for American journals on foreign trade. He is an importer of optical instruments. He is not good with English, and I speak his native language fluently, and can turn his work into English. I am also his secretary."

"Continue, please." Doc was aware of some of the young woman's exquisite curves, and of the warm grip she was keeping on his arm.

"We had never seen the man who walked in before," said the girl. "He simply took up his job of guarding us."

"Why?" Doc asked.

"I don't know." The young woman squeezed Doc's arm. "And I don't know why the mysterious attacks were aimed at us in the first place."

Doc Savage reached out and almost patted the young woman's small, marvelously built hand, almost took it in his own bronze fingers. Then some solidity of thought returned, and he drew in a breath and stepped away, so that the shapely hand slipped from his sleeve.

"Know anything else?" he asked, his voice vaguely stirred.

"No." The young woman gave the bronze man a glance which was nothing if not disturbing.

"Does Lieber Von Zidney know what it is all about?" Doc persisted.

“Ham,” was Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks, the remaining member of Doc Savage’s group of five aids. Ham was also the pride of Harvard law school alumni and was frequently nominated by magazines of fashion as the best-dressed man in the United States.

“Ham!” Doc called, a rap of imperativeness in his trained voice.

Ham had been assigned the task of keeping track of Fuzzy and his gang. Doc had directed Ham to keep in touch by radio at every opportunity.

“Ham!” Doc called again.

There was no response, nothing to show how Ham was making out with his job of shadowing snaky, hairy Fuzzy and Shade and the rest of the gang which had gaunt Johnny a prisoner.

Chapter VIII THE DEATH PATROL

LONG, bony, big-worded Johnny was seeking to extract some vague bit of information from his captors.

“This dilemma presents a labyrinthine physiognomy,” he murmured. “Truly a cosmorama infinitely—”

“Whew!” muttered Shade, from the driver’s compartment. “Have him speak English!”

“Shut up!” directed Fuzzy. “We’ll soon be home.”

Shortly after this, Shade drove the bread truck up the neat driveway edged by green shrubbery to the trim bungalow with the verdant shutters and tile roof the color of blood. No one got out until the car was in the attached garage.

They all unloaded. It was a bit gloomy in the garage.

Fuzzy selected a man with a finger and directed, “Useless, you go out and kinda gander around the place, just in case. I ain’t got no reason to think anything is wrong, but it never hurts to be careful—as the rooster said after he flew into the thorn tree.”

The designated man went out.

Fuzzy led the others inside. He was in an expansive good humor.

“Doc Savage will find that note and burn it,” he said. “That’ll be his end!”

“I’d watch that dame, India Allison, if I were you,” a man said.

“She’s doing what she’s told,” said Fuzzy. “Don’t worry about her.” Fuzzy then directed a man to make some coffee in the kitchen, after which he decided he’d get a late newspaper. He walked out to the street.

The newspaper boy who was fifty years old was still there, and Fuzzy bought a paper and made some comments as he read it.

“The whole dang navy is what a prissy guy would call ‘in a dither,’” he said. “Boy—are they balled up and wondering what’s coming next!”

In the house, Fuzzy laughed aloud, then stopped and looked suddenly sober.

“Wonder what they’ll say when Captain Blackstone Toy’s dawn patrol of naval airplanes is destroyed this morning?”

He seemed about to elaborate on this, but there was a shout from outside. The man designated as “Useless,” who had been sent to look the grounds over, came slamming back inside.

“Shade!” he bawled. “Shade! Something’s got Shade!”

The man who had driven the truck was in the room. He looked bewildered.

“If anything’s got me, it’s the first time I knew of it!” he snapped.

Useless stabbed an arm at him. “This guy ain’t Shade! I found Shade stuck with a sword cane that was lying beside ‘im, and there was dope of some kind on the sword cane’s point! The sword cane only stuck ‘im in the arm, but it made ‘im senseless!”

FOR a matter of ten seconds or so, there was comparative silence.

Somebody became choked and gave a loud cough. It was as if he had fired a starting gun.

Shade—the fake one—whipped for the nearest window. Some one skidded a chair in his path. He went down, rolled as he fell, hands tearing at his coat.

He brought from an armpit a gun like a huge automatic pistol with a drum magazine. Some one hit him with another chair. He yelled loudly and his black hat with the yanked-down brim was knocked off. He lost his queer gun.

Johnny looked at the embattled fake Shade and recognized him.

“Ham!” Johnny howled. “I’ll be superamalgamated! Ham!”

Johnny promptly became a bundle of flailing arms and legs. Two men had kept always close to him, but these had their attention distracted at the moment. Johnny knocked them both down.

Fuzzy began jumping up and down like a man having a fit.

“Ham is one of Doc Savage’s men!” he squawled. “Ham put Shade out with a sword cane he carried and took Shade’s place and none of us noticed it!”

Johnny kicked Fuzzy in the stomach. A gun went off. Ham was striking the faces of two men and trying to kick a third in the midriff.

Another gun went off. Chairs were flying. A table came flying across the room and Johnny dodged it.

Fuzzy got his breath and squawked, “Get ‘em! Kill ‘em! If they get away, the boss’ll skin us alive!”

The uproar grew louder, the action more dizzy. Men were all over the floor. Other men came running in.

Johnny and Ham, outnumbered, were seized and held helpless.

FUZZY and his men did nothing but pant for a few moments.

“Talk about—a merry-go-round!” one gulped. “These two birds are the ponies’ necks!”

“You oughta be thankful—they wasn’t Doc Savage himself!” another puffed.

Ham—erstwhile Shade—said loudly and impressively. “You men are trapped! Throw your weapons down, give yourselves up and it will go easier with you!”

“Kick his face in!” Fuzzy directed. “He’s bluffing!”

Ham was soundly drubbed while they held him. Ham had a high forehead, piercing eyes, and a large orator’s mouth. The piercing eyes were blacked and the orator’s mouth was split in three places.

During this excitement, bony Johnny lay flat on his back, his hands behind him and under him, with two men seated on his chest. He writhed about in a peculiar fashion.

Johnny asked suddenly and loudly, “Did I hear something said about disaster

menacing a squadron of planes under the command of Captain Blackstone Toy?”

“Kick *his* face in!” Fuzzy yelled, pointing at Johnny.

In the midst of the drubbing being given to Johnny, hairy Fuzzy heard something. His serpentine aspect was enhanced, now that he was excited. He made a wild series of hissing noises, and finally got silence.

“Somebody comin’!” he croaked. “This bird Ham outfoxed us and has probably been keeping Doc Savage posted! This must be Doc Savage comin’!”

An automobile moaned up and slid to a stop in the driveway, tires squealing. Fuzzy and his men put their guns and their heads out of windows and examined the car.

The car held the man who had been watchman at Lieber Von Zidney’s residence. Also in the car was Lieber Von Zidney himself, the sweet looking girl, India Allison, and a prisoner.

The prisoner was apelike Monk.

“Well, I hope to be buried at sea!” Fuzzy gulped. “Monk! Say, we’ve got three of Doc Savage’s men! Not a bad score!”

Then Fuzzy must have thought of something. He made a series of hissing noises in his wild haste to speak.

“This place is dangerous!” he squawled. “This bird Ham has outfoxed us and has probably been keeping Doc Savage posted! Savage may have the place surrounded now! Come on! We’ll blow!”

They charged out, hauling their prisoners, and got into their cars and drove wildly out of the grounds, their guns ready. They were agreeably surprised when nothing happened to deter their flight.

“What’re we gonna do?” a man asked Fuzzy.

“Contact the chief,” Fuzzy growled, “then lie low until Captain Blackstone Toy’s flight of planes is taken care of.”

“But what about Doc Savage?”

“He’ll never catch up with us now!”

Chapter IX DOOMED FLIGHT

DOC SAVAGE approached the white bungalow with the green shutters unobtrusively in his convertible roadster. The

aboard one of the crash boats. They crouched in the enclosed cockpit, amid first-aid equipment and pumps for removing water from the lungs of drowning aviators, as the boat darted away from the wharf.

Captain Blackstone Toy's plane had been first to start down. It was first to crash. Yet, with what appeared to be marvelous skill, Captain Toy fought it level just above the surface, so that it hit on the fuselage, glanced, hit again, and turned over.

An instant later, the other planes were down. They hit hard enough to vanish beneath the surface almost at once. Only two remained on top. They promptly burst into flames.

Captain Toy's ship was one of those that burst into flame. It sank quickly and Captain Toy was carried down, still in the cockpit.

Doc Savage, when the crash boat was near enough, dived after Toy's sinking plane.

THIS water was bitterly cold. It was full of tiny whirls and rushing up-and-down currents, for this was a tide rip so vigorous that it was avoided even by yachtsmen sailing this part of the coast.

The moving water tugged at the bronze man, pummeled him. He had to swim violently to reach the sinking plane.

The sinking craft was deep now. The streamlined fuselage offered few handholds. Doc reached the observer's cockpit. It was empty. He hauled himself forward.

The other cockpit was occupied. The slide hatch had jammed in some fashion, and the pit's occupant had been unable to break out. Doc tore at the hatch.

The plane was sinking fast. It was down so deep now that there was darkness all around. The pressure had become terrific. Doc's wrenching got the hatch loose at one corner. The efforts of the man in the cockpit helped.

The flyer was about exhausted, probably more than half drowned. In addition, terror seized him, and he grabbed frantically at Doc Savage, as drowning men, however strong their will power, will.

Doc held him off without much difficulty, the bronze man's developed strength making it unnecessary to resort to

the usual expedient of knocking the man senseless.

"You've saved Captain Blackstone Toy!" an ensign yelled as Doc and the other man were hauled aboard a minute later.

"Better get him under a pulmotor," Doc advised. "He took in quite a bit of water."

The crash boat was busy for the next few minutes. All the planes had sunk by now. Some aviators were swimming. One of these drowned before he could be saved. It was necessary to dive for two more.

One man was moaning as they hauled him out of the water.

"Something seemed to grab my plane—to pull it down!" he gasped hysterically.

HALF an hour later, Captain Blackstone Toy was able to talk. He addressed his first words to Doc Savage.

"There is no question but that you saved my life!" he said earnestly. "I hope that I shall never be so ungrateful as to forget that, and I hope that my chance shall come to repay you in whatever measure I can."

Pat, in the background, murmured, "A right nice speech, I call that."

Doc Savage asked, "What happened, Toy?"

Captain Blackstone Toy became very still on the cot on which he lay. He bit his lips doubtfully.

"In the face of being called a liar, I will say that something unseen simply seemed to grab the plane," he said finally. "I fought the controls. It was no use. I put forth my most Herculean effort just before we struck the water, but although the ship came level, I do not think I could have held it so."

"What, exactly happened to the plane?" Doc persisted.

"Some *force* seemed to seize it!" said Captain Blackstone Toy.

Another man offered, "It is exactly such statements that the other disaster survivors make!"

There was silence in the hangar where the men were gathered.

"*What's happening to the navy?*" a man asked hoarsely.

"Whatcha mean?" another grunted.

"*These disasters!*" the man said slowly. "What is wrecking these ships?"

Doc Savage studied Captain Blackstone Toy, then asked, "What do you know about this affair?"

Captain Toy pondered, then said, "Nothing."

"I'd like to speak to this man alone," Doc announced.

Chapter X ZEPHYR!

THERE was some hesitation, for Doc wore no insignia to show the navy men why any order he gave should be obeyed. The commandant, however, issued a sharp command, and a moment later, Doc was alone with Captain Blackstone Toy. Even Pat was escorted, indignant, outside.

Captain Toy was watching Doc Savage. He seemed to read something in the bronze man's manner.

"What's wrong?" Captain Toy demanded. After a minute, he added, "I can take it!"

"Your brother," Doc Savage said, "is dead."

Captain Toy wet his lips. "I knew it. I got the news last night."

"Before he died, he sent a message to me, asking to get something from behind his picture in your apartment," Doc Savage added.

Captain Blackstone Toy got off the cot. He collapsed almost immediately, holding his head in his hands.

"I knew of the stuff behind the picture," he mumbled. "Didn't you get it?"

"No."

Toy absently picked at his insignia of captain in the navy.

"It was a typewritten account of what my brother, Bowen Toy, had overheard, or thought he had overheard," he said. "Would you care to hear about it?"

"Go ahead," Doc directed.

"My brother was visiting me at this naval airport," said Captain Blackstone Toy. "He chanced to overhear something which led him to believe there was a plot underfoot against the navy."

"Just whom did he overhear?" Doc Savage asked.

"It was two mess stewards, little fellows who look like foreigners, that Bowen

overheard talking," said Blackstone Toy. "One steward said: 'The preparations have been in the making for years. Now everything is ready. We will wipe out the American navy before we can be stopped. Then our nation will attack.'"

Captain Toy paused as if probing in his memory for further details.

"My brother heard the other steward answer, 'Our warships are already off the United States coast ready for the attack.' The steward had a newspaper when he said that. We did not get a glimpse of the newspaper, so we do not know what foreign navy was meant."

Doc Savage directed, "Show me the stewards who were overheard talking!"

Captain Blackstone Toy made a helpless gesture.

"They deserted the next day," he said. "They must have learned my brother and I suspected them."

Doc Savage said quietly, "This is not very much information."

"I know it's not," said Toy. "And I'm sorry. I think my brother knew, or had overheard, other things after the incident here at the flying field. Unfortunately, I do not know what he did overhear."

Captain Blackstone Toy was a sturdily built man with lots of chest and jaw, which might or might not mean anything with regard to character. He wore a military uniform, and all military uniforms look rather much alike. His hair was curly, looked as if he used a good grade of hair oil on it. He had eyes which looked somewhat as if they were cast out of file steel.

The pause was broken when Doc Savage got up suddenly. He had been standing where his gaze could range through the small side door of the hangar, and sweep a line of bushes which paralleled the flying-field edge at some distance.

Skulking in the bushes was the elderly newsboy who had haunted the scenes of action thus far.

DOC SAVAGE barely glimpsed the fellow. The bronze man made no move to show that he was particularly interested. Instead, he strolled to the big outer hangar door, humming under his breath.

The humming became louder, and turned into words of some exotic, guttural song in a foreign language.

The song was not unmusical, and the interesting quality of it was enhanced by the power and depth of the bronze man's voice. Then he stopped singing, the song having apparently lost interest, and went back into the hangar.

"There is nothing more that you can tell me?" he asked Captain Blackstone Toy.

"I have been racking my brain," said Captain Toy. "There is nothing. And I'm terribly sorry."

He paused and rubbed the palms of his hands on his khaki-breeched thighs, then put out his prominent-jaw.

"Look here, Savage! Some kind of devilish organization of spies or sabotage agents from a foreign power has apparently killed my brother! I will do anything in my power to secure vengeance! May I offer my services? May I take your orders until the devils are brought to justice?"

Captain Toy looked grimly determined as he waited for Doc's verdict. There was also a plea in his eyes.

"Help is something no one ever has too much of," Doc Savage said quietly.

Which statement would have surprised Renny, Long Tom, Pat and the others who knew Doc Savage well, for the unusual bronze man was noted for his lone-wolf manner of doing things. Doc rarely accepted aid from any one outside his circle of acquaintances.

"Then I can work with you?" Toy demanded.

"Yes."

Then Doc Savage seemed to be waiting for something to happen outside—as in truth he was.

PATRICKA SAVAGE, walking briskly on high heels and looking pleased with herself, came up to big-fisted Renny and invalidish-looking Long Tom.

"Didn't you hear the orders Doc gave you a minute ago?" she demanded.

"Huh?" grunted pale Long Tom.

"Holy cow!" said Renny. "No! What'd Doc say?"

"He gave you orders," Pat said. "He came to the door of the hangar and sang them in Mayan, that language that only Doc

and the rest of our gang speaks. You know, the one you all learned when you had that fantastic affair in the Valley of the Vanished in Central America."

"What were the orders?" Renny thumped.

Pat smiled sweetly. "Boys, you should have been close enough to hear the orders when Doc gave them. Of course, Doc is too swell a guy to raise Cain, but you'll feel bad about it, won't you?"

"Come on!" Renny growled. "What'd Doc want? Out with it!"

Pat's smile grew more sugary. "Look, you two boys be nice and help persuade Doc to let me have a part in this excitement, and I'll tell you."

"Chiseler!"

"Blackmailer!"

"No helpee, no tellee."

Long Tom and Renny tried to scowl her down, but had no luck.

"All right," they agreed.

"Doc sang in Mayan that there was an elderly man skulking in the bushes near the road," Pat explained swiftly. "The old fellow has been playing the part of a newsboy, and has appeared often enough so that his actions are suspicious. Doc wants us to get on the other side of the bushes, and grab the old fellow when he's frightened toward us."

"Come on!" Renny roared.

They took up their positions, not so hastily as to attract suspicion, being careful to keep out of sight of the bushes in which lurked the elderly newsboy.

They had hardly gotten themselves stationed when Doc Savage came out of the hangar. He was running—straight toward the bushes.

"Stop that old newsboy!" Doc yelled.

Naturally, the elderly news vender was frightened into flight. He popped out of the bushes, head cocked over one shoulder—and ran straight into Renny's big hands.

What happened next was something that Renny put into his autobiography.

THE old newsboy calmly put two fingers in both of Renny's ears. An ordinary man could never have done that successfully. But this old fellow was no ordinary man. He was as fast as lightning.

They bought a newspaper on the way to the airport to take a plane back to New York.

Headlines in the paper indicated that two more U. S. battleships had sunk, for no good reason that could be explained.

"Gosh!" grunted Long Tom. "A war would hardly knock off destroyers and battleships that fast!"

They rode a regular passenger line plane to Newark airport, and took a taxi from there. Long Tom, a frugal soul, sat in front and grumbled about the expense of taking a taxi. He had once asked half a million dollars to superintend a hydro-electric project in Africa.

They bought another newspaper in Manhattan.

It said that Doc Savage had been appointed as representative of the U. S. navy in a certain secret mission.

When they reached Doc's skyscraper headquarters, the telephone was ringing. Doc lifted the receiver.

"This is August Atlanta Braun," said a pleasantly robust voice over the wire. "In the street in front of your headquarters, a taxi is waiting. It will look like an ordinary taxi until you notice that a piece of bright-red string is tied to the right rear wheel, the wheel next to the curb. You will get in. The driver will do the rest. No harm will befall you, unless you neglect to come alone."

At the start of the conversation, Doc had switched an amplifier and loudspeaker into the circuit, so that all in the room heard the voice.

Captain Blackstone Toy, who was along, exploded, "But you won't go!"

"Of course," Doc told him quietly.

"But it may be a trap!" the naval officer argued. "Probably is!"

Doc Savage said, "Clues, leads to what is behind this affair, are too scarce to warrant the exercise of too much discretion."

The man of bronze walked out, and the others, attempting to follow him, found the door locked in some unexpected and mysterious fashion.

THE taxi was like a thousand others, except that it had a red string tied to the spoke of one wheel. Doc Savage walked straight to the machine and got in. Without a word, the driver put the cab in motion.

The driver was a lean man. The hair on the back of his neck, below his hackman's cap, was long, and the skin underneath had a different color. A wig, of course. By reaching forward, Doc could have grabbed the man's face and turned it around to get a look at it. He did not.

They drove southward, then out on Long Island, and to the south shore, which is low and marshy. It was a long drive. The chauffeur said not a word.

They got in a little flat-bottomed, canvas-covered boat fitted with an outboard. Doc saw the guide's face then.

It was a face easy to remember. The face was round, but the nose wasn't, and the ears were big, attached flaps. Doc could not recall ever having seen the man before, and had he, he would have remembered him.

The water was shallow. The boat ran rapidly, the driver guiding it with a practiced ease. Noise of the outboard motor frightened up birds. The salt water grass all around them was thick and tall. They saw no humans other than themselves.

They came at last to a small seaplane. The wings and fuselage were painted green, and from the air it was doubtful if it would attract attention. It was anchored. Moored to one seaplane float was a tiny outboard racing hull which could probably do fifty miles an hour.

On the seaplane wing stood the elderly newsboy.

He had changed his clothes, was wearing a pair of greenish coveralls and a neat white helmet, new looking, with the ear flaps turned up. He displayed a big grin.

"I'm August Atlanta Braun," he said. "Are you surprised?"

Doc Savage said nothing.

"I had better explain some things before I do anything else," said ex-elderly newsboy August Atlanta Braun, in a pleasantly cultured voice. "I was shadowing our enemies—the gentlemen representing that foreign power which is doing our navy so much damage. They have lady representatives, too, one of whom you met—the charming and clinging India Allison. As I say, I was watching the gang, and that is how you happened to see me. Have you any questions to ask about that?"

Doc Savage did not speak.

"Of course," said Braun, "I fled when you tried to seize me, because I do not wish

to give up my liberty. Oh, no! You will notice that I have at hand here the means to escape by air or by water. I would not advise you to dive into the water in hope of reaching me before I can do anything about it. Look, and you will see the reason."

Doc had already looked at the water. It was covered with some kind of liquid film which floated on top, and which was not oily.

"An acid," said Braun. "Deadly poisonous. If it gets on your skin, you would die very shortly. So I do not advise you to try to swim to me. You see, I am a very cautious man."

DOC SAVAGE said nothing.

Braun asked, "Is the navy convinced that a foreign power is really wiping it out?"

Doc made no reply.

Braun scowled blackly, then twisted his lips into a thin smile and said, "As I said, I am not going to be seized! I have a bone to pick! Indeed I have!"

He began to look angry, and apparently what he was thinking about made him angrier and angrier until his jaw was out, his lips were off his teeth. He looked ready to spit sulphur.

"A year ago, I took my invention to the United States government!" he yelled. "I offered it to them free! Did they take it? No! I'll say they didn't! Instead, an incompetent nincompoop of a clerk insulted me! The nitwit as much as said I was a crank, a nut!"

"My dear Doc Savage, they will pay for that. Now that they need my invention, now that they have to have it, they will pay through their dear sweet nostrils for insinuating I was a goof!"

He was all but shaking in his rage. He stopped yelling and began cursing Uncle Sam.

"My country, is it!" he squawled. "Damn my soul, they'll pay me for being a patriot! They'll pay me one hundred million dollars!"

Doc Savage spoke for the first time. One word.

"What?"

"One hundred million dollars!" August Atlanta Braun howled. "One hundred million dollars! In cash! In French, Italian, English and German money, as well as small United States greenbacks. You will remember that, please! They may even include some

Japanese yen and Argentine pesos. I intend to travel a bit after I am paid off. And, anyway, it would be almost impossible to pass one hundred million dollars in American money."

"You seem to think you will get it," Doc Savage said.

"I know I will," Braun said more quietly. "Otherwise, the United States navy will be destroyed. I have a tiny machine which will save the navy. I invented it. When I offered to give it to the navy, knowing what was coming, they laughed at me as a crank. Now they will pay me one hundred million dollars. Go tell them that!"

Doc Savage was silent.

"Go tell them that!" Braun howled. "I will get in touch with you and find out what they say!"

Doc Savage said quietly, "I can tell you right now what they will say."

"What?"

"That you are foolish to think the United States government can be black-jacked in any such manner as this."

August Atlanta Braun laughed loudly and nastily.

"Before long, the United States will awaken to the realization that a hundred million is a cheap price to pay for the safety of the United States," he said. "This foreign nation is afraid to attack us if our navy is intact."

"What nation is it?" Doc asked.

Braun laughed again. "You probably have a good idea. I am not going to say anything. After all, I don't give a damn if the nation does go on sinking United States navy battleships. I'm not very patriotic where one hundred million dollars is concerned."

"Obviously," Doc agreed.

"This concludes our interview," said Braun. "You will return alone. No doubt, you can run an outboard motor boat."

The pilot of the motor boat climbed off onto the pontoon of the plane. Doc had no chance to make a move. Braun had drawn a gun.

"I'll get in touch with you later," said Braun again.

DOC SAVAGE did not move for some time, made no gesture at departing.

"What about the *Zephyr*?" he asked suddenly.

more the contour of an airplane wing cross-section.

The *Zephyr's* flight was to take her out over the Atlantic, the object being to fly extremely high and test the efficiency of an intricate device which was intended to locate, in absolute darkness or the most intense fog, any enemy plane, airship, or even a battleship or submarine, in the vicinity.

When the corrugated surface of the Atlantic was below, Doc Savage picked up the suitcase which he had brought aboard. He climbed a spidery, extremely lightweight staircase to the catwalk, which ran from the bow to stern of the dirigible.

Renny, Pat and Long Tom, looking interested, followed the bronze man. They knew Doc well enough to know that something was about to happen.

DOC carried his suitcase to the nose of the dirigible, and stopped near the intakes of the big ventilators. These ventilators kept the catwalks and runways inside the giant gas bag free of seepage gas which might overcome a man at an inopportune moment.

Doc Savage opened the suitcase. It held four metal tube containers fitted with petcocks. Doc took these tubes out.

"All of you took that concoction which was given the crew before departure?" he asked his aids.

Renny, Long Tom and Captain Toy nodded.

"I didn't," Pat said. "I didn't care for its taste! Any time I down something as rank as that stuff, I've got to know the reason first!"

Doc said, "This must be your contrary day, Pat. Fortunately, the results of your not taking the concoction, while not pleasant, will not necessarily be fatal."

Pat snapped, "Say, what do you mean?"

Without answering, Doc held one of the metal tubes inside a ventilator intake and opened a petcock. There was a hissing, and a gas came out of the tube container. The vapor was blue in color.

The rush of air carried it through the ventilating ducts. In a few moments, it would penetrate throughout the dirigible.

Pat Savage happened to be standing where some of the gas enveloped her. She had a suspicion all was not going to be well,

and she held her breath as long as she could. But at last, she had to inhale.

An incredulous expression came over her face.

"Oh!" she gasped. "Ha, ha, ha! I don't see—ha, ha!—what—ha!—ha!"

She went off into a fit of laughter.

Big-fisted Renny shook his head slowly.

"Pat has her moments, but I never thought she'd go off this way," he said gloomily. "There's nothing to laugh at around here, what with the navy being wrecked and Johnny, Monk and Ham maybe dead."

"Ha!—ha!" gurgled Pat. "I'm not—ha!—ha!—laughing—ha!"

Doc Savage said, "It's the gas."

"The what?" Renny thumped.

"A new type of laughing gas," Doc answered. "It's harmless, but it throws the victims into paroxysms of laughter which they cannot help. It affects the muscles and nerves of the throat."

"But I'm not affected!" Renny boomed.

"The strong-tasting liquid given you and the crew was an antidote," Doc explained. "Had Pat taken hers, she would not be affected."

"Ha!—ha!" gurgled Pat. "I hope—ha!—ha!—somebody hangs for this!"

"But I don't get the idea!" Long Tom exclaimed.

"If there are stowaways aboard," Doc pointed out, "we can now hear them."

AT Doc's command, the engines, the generators, the air compressors and other machines aboard the *Zephyr* were stopped. Squads of sailors began searching the catwalks and inspecting tunnels, stopping frequently to listen for laughter.

They heard it before long, audible mirth. Cackling, whooping, gagging mirth. Armed sailors made for the sounds, which were aft, near the stern.

"Them guys are what you might call laughing themselves into a hell of a pickle!" said a bluejacket.

"Laughing themselves to death, if they're the ones who have been sinking navy ships!" grated another.

"They couldn't have sunk *all* the ships," corrected the first. "Some sank on the Pacific coast, thousands of miles from here."

feathered creature as yet uncatalogued by ornithologists.

This weird sound was a characteristic of Doc Savage, a small fantastic thing which he did in moments of mental stress. Frequently, he went for long intervals without making the sound. Again, it came often. Always, he was not conscious that he was making it—although he could stop making it, or start, at will.

"Hey!" barked Long Tom, color coming into his pale face. "What'd you see that caused that?"

Doc Savage said nothing in reply, which was another small, peculiar and frequently aggravating habit which he had.

The big sedan ran on, and after a while, turned into an alley. Doc got out. The others did likewise, because they knew of nothing else to do.

"Holy cow!" rumbled Renny. "Sometimes I like to know what I'm doing."

"What else can you expect out of Doc?" Pat asked.

They moved forward, following the bronze man.

Renny grunted at Pat. "What've you got it in for Doc for this time? You've done nothing but squawk at or about him."

Pat said, "I resent his idea that a woman cannot take care of herself as well as a man! Any woman is as entitled to adventure as a man! Why, look at the ancient Amazons, who—"

"Quiet," Doc Savage said. "Please!"

He stopped, pointed, and the others suddenly knew why they were in this part of town.

"The only factory of its kind near the city," Doc explained.

The electric sign which the bronze man had indicated was a small one. It read:

Acme Salt Co.

"Rock salt shipped in and later refined," Doc explained. "The salt which came out of Miss Allison's shoe was of a type which this factory alone handles."

"That means they led her through the salt storage yard when they took her away from their hiding place," Renny grunted.

Doc said, "There seems to be only one logical hiding place in this neighborhood: that old power plant to the north. Come on."

THE abandoned power plant was a relic of a day when street cars were the most popular form of transportation. It looked as if at least five years had elapsed since electricity had flowed from the place.

Boards had been nailed over the windows, and were still in place, but appeared ancient. Four tall brick chimneys had originally stood in the back, but one had fallen down. There was a brick wall around the place.

"Wait here," Doc Savage ordered.

The bronze man was gone before the others could object, or ask questions. So silently did he move, there was not often a stirring of shadows to show when he passed.

It was dark. The river was not far away, and a tugboat was going up it with a heavy tow, making considerable noise, what with the rattling of the exhaust and the boiling of water heaved up by the propellers.

Doc waited, watching a cloud sneak nearer the moon, and when it was darker, he went over the fence, then worked forward through a litter of bricks and rusting machinery, looking for signs of life.

A man on lookout stood near the base of one of the big chimneys. He betrayed his position by knocking dottle out of a pipe.

Doc crept toward him.

Then some one screamed in one of the darkened streets near by. It was a piercing scream, not of terror or fear, but of alarm.

"Watch it!" the voice shrieked. "Doc Savage's crowd!"

Doc Savage whipped toward the sentinel. But he was too late. Alarmed, the guard whisked into the power plant and banged a big iron door shut.

Doc hit the door. He knew instantly that he might as well have saved his effort. The door was too solid.

Inside the old power plant, there was excited shouting. A man was crying out, wanting orders.

"Von Zidney!" the man was screaming. "Von Zidney! What're we gonna do about this?"

THERE was no doubt about it. The man's voice was distinctly understandable.

"Von Zidney!" he was shouting. "Doc Savage is here! What'll we do?"

size in the world. Pale Long Tom handled the controls.

Doc and his party did not have August Atlanta Braun's machine in his box. It had gone to New London on a train, in a special car, in custody of some marines. The marines had not been told the thing might blow up, and might not have cared, anyway.

Big-fisted Renny was fingering some notes.

"August Atlanta Braun has had an eventful life, according to what I dug up," the big-handed engineer reported.

"He was in the navy for almost ten years. He got kicked out. His dishonorable discharge was handed him for taking graft. You see, he was in charge of buying stores, and let concerns hand him a cut for buying from them."

Renny continued, "Braun is a lucky one. He moved to Europe and became a citizen of a country over there. Now that helps him a lot. If he was a citizen of the United States, the government could do things to him. As it is, his status is that of a foreign inventor trying to sell something to the country."

"Anything else?" Doc asked.

"Nope," Renny said. "There's no record of Braun's whereabouts for the last few years, as far as I could learn, except that he is listed as a citizen of this European country."

Long Tom brought the plane down on New London harbor, and anchored it up by the coast guard academy, where the guardsmen could watch it.

Doc Savage said, "Renny, you'll stay with me. The rest of you go on ahead aboard the *Missouri*. Renny and myself will join you."

The *Missouri* was quite a few millions' worth of alloyed armor steel, guns and gadgets. She was chunky, her funnels and masts had an alert rake, and she looked, somehow, as haughty as a European dictator.

PRETTY India Allison, Long Tom, quarreling Monk and Ham, all got a nice enough reception aboard when they arrived with Captain Blackstone Toy.

Doc Savage and Renny were not very late. About fifteen minutes. They offered no explanation of what had made them late.

The *Missouri's* electric donkey engines cranked up her anchor, and she pushed out of the harbor mouth. She got up enough speed for steerageway and no more.

The strange canvas-covered box of August Atlanta Braun, the contraption he was trying to sell to the U.S. government for a hundred million dollars, was set up on top of a gun turret, where it was figured the thing could blow up, if it was going to blow up, without killing anybody but marines, who were going to close the switch with a long pole.

What happened next all came very swiftly.

"She's swinging!" the helmsman bawled suddenly, wildly.

"*Something's pulling her!*" he added an instant later.

Every one could feel the sharp swerve of the war giant of the seas. Men yelled. Signal bells jangled.

"Turn on the protector!" the commander squawled at the turret.

There was an instant of silence.

"Protector on, sir," came from the turret. The big battleship straightened back on her course.

Chapter XVI TRICK!

GREAT happenings are usually following my moments of silence. This one was. The same thought was probably in almost every mind. The U. S. navy was saved!

"I think," said an officer, "that this calls for a cheer!"

So, in a boyish spirit generated by a feeling of infinite relief, gray-bearded admirals and commanders sent a series of huzzahs ringing, frightening away the seagulls which were flying close in the dusk.

Doc Savage was already at a secluded spot back of the bridge. Here, big-fisted Renny and pale Long Tom crouched among a forest of delicate electrical and engineering gadgets.

"Your instruments register anything?"

Doc asked.

"Nothing," said Long Tom.

"No trace of a magnetic field?" Doc persisted.

depths—water seemed to have no effect on the thermit—the battleship *Missouri* passed, farther out in the bay, heading for the open sea.

“Guess they’re putting to sea, perfectly sure they’re safe with that fake box of ours aboard,” Renny said gloomily. “Holy cow! Only they don’t know it’s a fake box!”

Long Tom suggested, “Suppose we bring up what’s left after the thermit burns out and see if it will tell us anything?”

THEY did this. So potent was the thermit that a considerable interval of time elapsed before it became cool enough to be handled and brought to the surface.

A thorough examination told them nothing.

A motor boat approached. It was a naval craft of the type ordinarily called a “captain’s gig,” and was occupied by naval officers.

“The *Missouri* ran on a reef outside the harbor!” an officer yelled. “No one was killed, but the Braun machine proved worthless. It was opened by angry navy officials immediately after the crash. There was nothing inside but some scrap iron and excelsior waste!”

“That,” Doc Savage said, innocently, “is unfortunate.”

“Fortunate, I should say!” snapped the navy man. “Braun will never sell his worthless device to the U. S. navy now!”

Chapter XVII LOTS OF LUCK—ALL BAD

THE navy men went away in the captain’s gig. Big-fisted Renny said slowly, “If the navy ever gets wise that we stole the genuine machine, we’ll be lucky if they only skin us alive!”

“I do not like it either,” said Ham.

“Phooey!” grunted Monk, disagreeing with Ham as usual. “I’m not worried!”

Pretty India Allison wrung her hands. “I’m so worried!”

Monk grinned at her. “We’re perfectly safe.”

“I don’t feel that way!” she murmured.

Monk waited a few moments, until Doc Savage chanced to move into the rear of the plane cabin. Monk leaned closer to the girl and whispered:

“Don’t get worried, Miss Allison,” he advised. “I’m willin’ to bet that Doc knows just about all there is to know about this affair.”

“He hasn’t shown many signs of it,” wailed the girl. “He tried to examine that box, and it burned, so that he lost his only chance to learn what was inside it. Now—”

Doc Savage came from the rear of the plane cabin. He was carrying an object of considerable size, wrapped in heavy paper.

“Renny, can you watch the young lady?” Doc asked. “Take care of her while Monk, Ham and myself go ashore.”

“What about me?” pale Long Tom asked.

“You will stay here with Renny and the girl,” Doc advised. “Keep a sharp lookout. Our lives are in danger every minute.”

“Holy cow!” boomed Renny. “Won’t nobody pull anything on us!”

The plane was equipped with a collapsible boat for use as a dinghy, and Doc Savage, Monk and Ham rowed ashore.

Habeas Corpus, the homely pig, and Chemistry, the grotesque monkey which bore such a resemblance to Monk, were aboard. Doc, when asked if there was any reason why they should not be brought, had said there was none that he could see.

Once ashore, the bronze man led his rather unique little caravan into the yacht club, where they got a good deal of attention—until they departed furtively by a back door. Doc still carried his package.

They went, without attracting attention, to a commercial airport on the outskirts of the city. At Doc’s instruction, Ham, who looked less striking than Doc and Monk, went forward alone, showed his transport pilot’s license, and rented a plane, a six-place cabin job.

He taxied it down to the end of the field, under the pretense of getting ready to take off into the wind, and Doc and Monk loaded aboard hastily.

The plane took the air.

Monk and Ham were still in the dark as to what it was all about. They had not asked questions thus far, because Doc Savage had a habit of not answering questions unless he wanted to.

More often than not, he did not answer them for a good reason, though. But now curiosity got the best of Monk and Ham.

"Why all this business of hiring another airplane when we had a perfectly good seaplane in the harbor?" Monk asked. "A seaplane, I might add, which can fly rings around this ark."

"Our enemies will be watching our plane," Doc said. "They will if they have a fraction of the sense we credit them with. And if we had taken off and flown over the city, it would have looked suspicious, and might have warned them before we could find their hide-out."

"Oh!" mused Monk. "So we're looking for their hide-out now, huh?"

"Right."

Monk looked overside. It was very dark. Due to the lateness of the hour, alternate street lights had been turned out.

"Fat chance we've got of seeing anything in the dark!" snorted the homely chemist.

DOC SAVAGE plucked the paper from the object which he had brought along. It was long—about three feet—made of metal, composition and glass. It was equipped with handles for holding, and an opening at the back to take a man's eyes and forehead. This opening was edged with black cat fur. The thing looked like an aerial camera, fitted with a stereopticon back.

Monk said one word loudly. "Oh!"

Which meant that he understood the nature of the device. It was a contrivance perfected by Doc Savage, its inner mechanism consisting in effect of a film which traveled in front of a lens in the bottom of the device, then traveled around and passed in front of the eye of the observer.

The film was coated with a chemical which caught and preserved for a moment in fluorescence any trace of certain wave lengths of infra-light. Thus, a user of the device could observe, from a great distance, certain wave lengths of invisible light.

"I don't see how we'll spot 'em yet," Monk said.

"Remember the shots fired by myself with the rifle?" Doc asked.

"Huh!" Monk exploded.

"The cartridges were shells filled with chemical," Doc elaborated. "They hit the boat

and splashed on it. We should be able to spot the boat, wherever it is, by the glow it gives off."

Ham flew the plane above the seashore, not too high. Doc Savage used the infra-light spotter. The rays, of course, would be invisible to the naked eye, but Monk stared overside anyway.

They were well up the Thames River when Doc said, "There!"

Then he passed the device to Monk.

Monk looked. At first, he saw only blackness. Then he spotted a tiny, flickering dot of greenish phosphorescence. He got a bead on the thing, then jerked his eyes away from the viewing contrivance and decided where the launch was lying below.

"Right alongside that patch of electric lights," he said, "on the river bank."

"Exactly," Doc said. "Now we'll land and return to the seaplane."

They took the plane back to the field from which they had rented it. Half an hour later, they were standing on the shore near the spot where their seaplane was moored in the river.

"Ahoy the plane!" Doc called, and his trained voice carried surprisingly without being loud.

There was no answer from the plane.

"Ahoy, Renny, Long Tom!" Doc called.

"Ahoy, Miss Allison!" piped up Monk.

"Always got a woman on your mind!" Ham said scathingly. "You would call her—"

"Look!" Monk howled. "Something's dragging the plane under!"

DOC SAVAGE was in the water when Monk's excited howl ended. The homely chemist and the dapper lawyer dived after the bronze man closely.

They could see the plane. It was moving out toward deeper water, and at the same time, slowly going under. There was, as far as they could see in the darkness, nothing attached to the craft. It simply moved in uncanny fashion.

"Renny!" Ham shrieked. "What's wrong?"

No answer.

"Miss Allison!" Monk squeaked.

The plane fuselage was half under the surface now. It was the type of craft

got his outer clothing off. His undergarments were of a type which could double easily as a bathing suit. He waded out furtively.

From the submarine came an unearthly howl. Big-fisted Renny's voice! Big-fisted Renny himself popped out of the conning tower hatch.

RENNY was whooping at the top of his voice, which meant he was probably awakening the residents of Noank. The way he crossed the gangplank to the dock was a miracle. At every jump, he emitted a howl.

Men piled out of the conning tower hatch. The darkness outside, after the light within the submarine, seemed to baffle them. Renny gained ground.

Then Monk and Ham, down the shore, came charging recklessly to Renny's rescue, whooping at the top of their voices.

"Renny!" Monk bawled "Stick with 'em! We'll be helpin' ya in a minute!"

Renny heard the reassuring shout. Its effect on him was exactly the opposite of what might have been expected. He came to an abrupt stop, threw back his head, and emitted a warning howl on his own account.

"Go back!" he squawled. "They turned me loose!"

"It don't sound like it!" Monk roared, in reply.

"They let me get away!" Renny bellowed. "Now I see why! They wanted to trick you guys into showing yourselves. They musta known you were near. They got sentries out with telegraph wires!"

Whether Monk and Ham heard all that or not was doubtful. And, anyway, it was too late. For armed men suddenly arose behind Monk and Ham and rushed upon them.

Doc Savage, crouched in the shrubbery near the water, knew that he was observing the springing of an almost perfect trap contrived by the enemy on the spur of the moment.

The sentry Doc had overpowered had telegraphed a warning, and Doc's later attempt to quiet any alarm had failed, but they had let it seem that he had succeeded. Then they had sent men out into the darkness, furtively noiseless, and had released Renny to draw Doc and the others into the open.

Monk and Ham did not fight for long. Almost immediately, they were overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers.

THE obviously best thing for Doc Savage to do was to go to the aid of his two assistants, to help them fight clear. But Doc made no move. In the first place, there was a really excellent chance of getting shot. In the second place, he had another idea.

He glided along the beach, entered the water where the shadows were black, and sank beneath the surface. He swam underwater, swiftly at first, then more slowly when he knew the submarine must be near. The painted steel hull of the submarine did not have many barnacles on it.

Doc worked toward the bows, with the idea of clambering quietly upon the diving rudders, then gaining the deck and ducking down a hatch, to hide somewhere in the depths.

He managed it with even less difficulty than he had expected. The entire gang seemed to be outside, capturing Monk and Ham. But surely not the entire submarine crew! Doc was puzzled on that point.

The bronze man noted one thing in creeping across the deck to the hatch. The hull was very wet. Below, it was warm, and the air had that odor and heaviness which it has in a submarine which has lately been beneath the surface.

Forward seemed the logical place to remain hidden, so Doc moved in that direction. He moved with certainty, for he knew a great deal about submarines, having possessed one himself, which he had designed. He knew, of course, the layout of this big, modern craft.

He concealed himself in the forward torpedo room, under a pile of heavy canvas which was evidently a weather cloth and an awning which were put up when the submarine made long surface cruises. With a tiny hole torn in the canvas, he could observe what went on.

Feet tramped on deck as men returned aboard. They came clattering down the hatches, and there was some swearing and fighting as Monk and Ham were hauled below. The two prisoners, both resisting stubbornly, were yanked forward into the torpedo room.

Doc Savage remained perfectly quiet. This was a bad break, for more and more men crowded into the torpedo room. If they should attempt to move the canvas—

Fuzzy, Shade and the fellow once designated as Useless came in, along with others. Shade sat down on the canvas—on Doc's knee and foreleg to be exact. The bronze man gave no sign, made no movement, and Shade failed to detect the difference.

Fuzzy did the talking. But first he glared at the prisoners, Monk and Ham, as if he intended eating them.

"Where's Doc Savage?" Fuzzy growled.

Monk gave back a glare as fierce as Fuzzy's own.

"Don't kid us!" snarled the homely chemist. "You've got Doc already!"

"Oh, yes?" Fuzzy said, sarcastically.

"Yeah!" Monk gritted. "Doc disappeared! We know he was lookin' for you, and you musta grabbed 'im! We was prowlin' along the shore huntin' for 'im when this mess started!"

Fuzzy stared narrowly at his two captives. Ham's rather handsome features were inscrutable. Monk's homely face, however, was absolutely earnest. Monk was acting out the whopper he had just told, and doing a good job of it.

Apparently satisfied, Fuzzy jerked his head. "Put them with the prisoners."

Monk and Ham were carried out.

Chapter XIX BURIAL AT SEA

SHADE got up off Doc Savage's leg, turned around, and with a display of ill temper, gave the canvas a kick.

"That's a damned hard seat!" he growled.

Doc Savage gave no sign, although the skin on his leg was broken and the spot began to ooze a bit of crimson.

All of the gang moved out of the torpedo room, which was at best an ill-ventilated place, but had the advantage of having only one entrance and exit, which was why the two prisoners had been questioned here.

Doc carefully extricated himself from beneath the pile of canvas, and eased to the bulkhead door. Shade and another man were standing on the metal ladder which led up to a hatch in the adjacent compartment. They were talking.

"Boy, this is our lucky night," Shade remarked. "That fight a minute ago don't seem to have attracted any attention."

"What about the sentry we found senseless down the beach, the one who gave the alarm by telegraph?" The other man asked.

"He's coming out of it," Fuzzy said. "He don't know who grabbed him, or who he saw, but he thinks it musta been that big gorilla guy, Monk."

"How come he figure that?"

"From the way he was mauled around."

A voice came crackling from forward. Fuzzy! He was giving orders. A moment later, the exact text of what he was saying became understandable.

"Orders were for this submarine to sail for a test run an hour before dawn," Fuzzy said loudly. "The chief says it'll look suspicious unless we sail, so we'd better be getting under way."

Doc Savage listened. There was noise of hatches being closed and dogged down. This was done only to the forward hatches, over which seas might break when the submarine was outside. The conning-tower hatches could be left open for ventilation.

Lines were cast off, hauled aboard and coiled down in recessed steel deck lockers. It became evident from the slowness of the preparations and the amount of swearing and galloping about that not all of the men handling the craft were submarine experts. Indeed, there appeared to be not more than half a dozen experienced pigboat men aboard.

Getting under way from the wharf required some time. There was also difficulty in starting the Diesels. The engines fired off bravely enough at first, but some one had forgotten to turn on the fuel from the tanks, and after the oil in the lines was consumed, the motors stopped.

In the silence which followed, Doc Savage distinctly heard Monk's voice, loud and startled.

“Blazes!” Monk was saying. “For the love of little fishes! This thing ain’t no foreign submarine! *It’s an American submarine!*”

A volley of profanity from the engine room drowned out Monk’s voice.

“*An American submarine!*” Monk’s voice came again, a bit later.

Then they got the Diesels started.

THE submarine passed out of the harbor at a very slow rate of speed, with at least half a dozen men on the conning-tower bridge, arguing about which were channel lights. There was profanity in profusion when they nearly ran down a buoy.

Doc Savage heard two men come into the adjacent compartment. He chanced a brief glance and saw that they carried Monk and Ham’s two pets, Habeas Corpus and Chemistry. Evidently the animals had been captured before the submarine sailed.

When the submarine was well out into the open water, Fuzzy came below. He called several of his men and they all started for the torpedo room.

It was a bad moment for Doc Savage, for it seemed they had discovered him. But no. They merely wanted to talk in the torpedo room, because it was the quietest place aboard the submarine.

Doc Savage concealed himself under the pile of canvas. He could overhear, but could not see, for there had been no time to locate the tear through which he had observed proceedings earlier.

“Bring the crew of the submarine in here!” Fuzzy ordered loudly.

There ensued much activity. Doc, listening, could tell by the sounds that bound men were being carried into the control room and arrayed along the wall. These men swore heartily at their captors.

Doc took a chance and lifted a corner of the canvas. He could just barely glimpse two of the prisoners.

They wore the uniforms of submarine men, U. S. navy.

“That’s all of ‘em,” some one said finally.

“All right,” Fuzzy snapped. “Get everybody in here that’s not needed to run this pigboat.”

“What about the other prisoners, Doc Savage’s crowd and—”

“Leave a guard over them,” ordered Fuzzy. “But get everybody else in here. The chief has some things to say.”

“Is the chief aboard?” some one asked, in an awed voice.

“Yeah,” said Fuzzy. “Things are getting kinda critical, so he’s decided to keep out of sight. He’s in the skipper’s cabin, and he’ll join us in a minute.”

There was much scuffling as men entered the torpedo room. The air became close. There was some coughing. One of the prisoners created a commotion, and ended by getting himself knocked senseless.

Then abrupt silence fell. It was the kind of silence that reigns in a radio broadcasting studio the instant before the program goes on the air.

“The chief!” said Fuzzy. “I guess you all know who he is.”

“I’m here to have a little talk with you men,” said a new, authoritative voice.

Doc chanced lifting the canvas a bit again. But the leader was standing where it was impossible to see him.

THE submarine engines made a good deal of noise, and there was vibration. Electric fans whined, sucking air down through the ventilators, and generators and compressors added to the general din.

“Close that door,” the leader directed.

It was quieter, but not a whole lot, after the door was closed.

“We have all five of Doc Savage’s assistants aboard as prisoners,” said the leader. “We have, also, the girl, Pat Savage, and the other girl, India Allison, together with the stupid ignoramus who is her boss, Lieber Von Zidney.”

There was a pause while a man opened the door, put his head in, and said, “We’re clear of the island. What course, sir?”

“East by south,” directed Fuzzy. “That O. K., chief?”

“We want to take the submarine into deep water and submerge her,” replied the leader. “Then we will expel these navy men through the torpedo tubes in water so deep that the pressure will kill them. Not one of the sub crew will reach the surface alive.”

“That’ll be simple,” said Fuzzy. “But what about the other prisoners?”

There was a roar from Monk as he bounced from his chair. "You fashion plate!" he howled. "I'll make you see things in a moment, as soon as I get my hands on you!"

Monk was going to regret that last crack.

THE END

MAD EYES

Something was wrong. People who were otherwise sane and normal were beset by the strangest, weirdest sights. Eyes which functioned normally, all of a sudden changed in their task and almost drove people crazy. Even Doc and his companions fell prey to this strange malady—and all the things that went with it, until a smashing climax cleared eyes and atmosphere of foul schemes!

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